Amendments to the Claims

Claim 9 has been rewritten to overcome the rejection based upon Horning.

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1 – 5 (cancelled).

6. (original) A method of performing a crunch or crossover exercise for strengthening the abdominal muscles of a user comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a compressible and resilient pad having a substantially flat first surface adapted to lie on the abdomen of a user while in a supine position, the pad having a second surface formed at a first obtuse angle to the first surface and a third surface formed at a second obtuse angle to the first surface;

(b) engaging the second surface with the arms and engaging the third surface with the upper thighs;

(c) contracting the abdominal muscles such that the arms and upper thighs push against said second and third surfaces thereby compressing the pad.

7. The method of claim 6, step (a), further including the substeps of:

(1) providing a void in an upper surface of the pad;

(2) providing inserts for said void of materials having different densities and compressibility factors;

(3) placing a selected one of said inserts into said void prior to performing steps (b) and (c).

8 (original). The method of claim 7 wherein the void comprises a substantially U-shaped void.

9 (currently amended). An exercise device for providing resistance to a user in the performance of an abdominal crunch or crossover exercise while the user is lying supine, comprising a resilient and compressible pad of material having a first substantially planar surface for placement upon the abdomen of the user, a second surface extending at an obtuse angle to the first surface and sized and shaped to engage the upper thighs of the user while performing said crunch exercise, and a third surface extending at an obtuse angle to the first surface and sized and shaped to contact the arms of the user while performing a crunch or crossover exercise wherein at least portions of said second and third surfaces are forced toward each other when said exercise is performed by a user.

10 (original). The exercise device of claim 9 further including a top surface having a void for receiving inserts of material of different densities and compressibilities to thereby define the degree of resistance encountered by the user when performing said crunch exercise.

11 (original). The exercise device of claim 10 wherein said void portion is substantially U-shaped in cross section.

12 (original). The exercise device of claim 9 wherein said obtuse angle is in the range of 100° to 120° relative to said first surface.